

121 are perpetuated as indices of status—to the extent, indeed, that with  
551 the matrilineal Thangal group, who also claim patrilineal descent  
from the Prophet, an elaborate combination of patronymics and  
matronymics has been developed (1959, p. 501).

## CONCLUSION

121 In view of the great number of communities that have remained  
171 untouched, the evidence considered in detail may seem to offer only a  
very narrow theoretical base. This is not so. We have attempted to  
show that the general structural model may be connected to a great  
variety of descent patterns. Only a few cases would be sufficient to  
demonstrate the point. We have found many more. We have also  
noted the interesting balance in the customary recognition given to  
the formal claims of the paternal and maternal relatives upon the  
children of the marriage. In structures such as the Tanjore Brahman,  
121 where the father-son relationship is assured by common residence and  
593 inheritance, it is precisely the rights of the MB which are elaborated  
604 at all *rites de passage*, and the ZS has formal obligations at this man's  
764 funeral.

121 In the matrilineal structure of Malabar and Ceylon we find in con-  
593 trast that the great proliferation of ceremonial is concerned with the  
764 rights and obligations of the father. Quite apart from the entire com-  
plex of *Tali kettu kalyanam* in Malabar, we may note that the obliga-  
tions of the son at this father's funeral receive special emphasis, par-  
ticularly among the Nayar. As Fawcett notes in connection with Nayar  
604 funerals: "The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none sur-  
viving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the  
head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the  
same time to the pyre at the foot of the corpse" (Thurston, 1906, p.  
171 209). At this most solemn occasion the Nayar and the Kandyan  
Sinhalese agree on balancing the obligations of the offspring of brother  
and sister, for with the Sinhalese, too, the ZS as well as the son must  
partake in the final rites of a man.

121 There is always the emphasis on the connections between the chil-  
593 dren of the brother and the sister. Brother and sister must be sepa-  
605 rated, but their offspring must also be united. Dumont writes of the  
double principles of consanguinity and affinity, but it seems that the  
121 two must be intermeshed to protect and perpetuate the purity of  
602 the family. Perhaps this is an aspect of the union of those divine crea-  
171 tive principles which one hears so much about in Indian philosophy:  
812 male and female, man and wife, the Brahman Lord and his consort,  
771 Shiva and Shakti. These are two, but they are also one.  
601 Even the terminology of kinship exemplifies the idea of the union

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of the two principles in one. Thus, such terms as *massina* (Sinh. and Tamil) and its variants *maittunan* or *maccinan* (Tamil) and *maiduna* (Kannada), all of which carry the implication of cross-cousins who are expected to unite, appear to be derived from the Sanskrit *maiduna* or *mithuna* which also refers to the sexual intercourse between the god Shiva and the goddess Shakti, who are both one and two.<sup>10</sup> The depiction of them in the very act of union (*mithuna*) is one of the intriguing motifs in Indian religious sculpture, a form of art which in its formal beauty and religious expressiveness is almost unmatched.

These ideas are not intended to be mysterious. They are simply the logical implications of caste principles carried to their very limit in the highest caste. There should be no doubt at all that Indian thinkers, great logicians and great mystics, should have been concerned with the ultimate origin of purity.<sup>11</sup>

A conception such as this, the union of man and wife, who are also the children of a brother and sister, allows us to observe the principle of *jati* ("caste," but also birth, category) from the inside. The narrowest circle is the individual. Then the couple, ideally cross-cousins. Then the small circle of kin who intermarry with one another. And going on from this, wider and wider concentric circles and the more inclusive categories of caste. The patterns of North India are likely to be different, but the principles of caste endogamy are intimately related to the family in South India and Ceylon.

Our itinerary has now been completed. We started from a mountain village in Ceylon and widening our investigations have ended up in South India. Behind the great differences in thought and behavior, we have found that the general principles of kinship appear to have considerable uniformity in this region. Ostensibly, kinship systems can be classified as matrilineal, patrilineal, hypergamous, and bilateral in Ceylon: a rapid journey through the Tamil-speaking parts, the Nilgiri Hills, and the Malabar coast has made us aware that a similar classification is possible in South India. But all these variations appear to exist within the framework of principles common to all the groups we have considered.

It is to be hoped that it will be possible in the future to carry the work farther north in order to learn whether South Indian structures are transformed into North Indian structures. In the realm of kin structure in South India and Ceylon, we appear to be dealing with

<sup>10</sup> On the etymology of the terms see Karve (1953), p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> It seems possible that one of the simplest and most frequent ritual acts in Ceylon and South India—the splitting of a coconut into two and allowing the liquid inside to run out—may be a part of *mithuna* symbolism. For the coconut has a male and a female end: in the act the male and the female are split. This is an idea of wide prevalence in Ceylonese ritual; see Yalman (1966).

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